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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/51/614)]

51/70. Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/113 of 20 December 1993, 49/173 of 23 December 1994 and, in particular, 50/151 of 21 December 1995,

Taking note with satisfaction of the successful conclusion of the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, held at Geneva on 30 and 31 May 1996,

Aware that involuntary, mass displacement, in addition to the human suffering involved, imposes significant economic and social burdens and may affect security and stability at the regional level,

Reaffirming the view of the Conference that, while the primary responsibility for tackling population displacement problems lies with the affected countries themselves, the serious challenges cannot be met by the limited resources and experience of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States individually,

Recalling that the protection and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to prevent mass population displacement,

Mindful that effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference[1] should be facilitated and can be ensured only through cooperation and coordinated activities undertaken in this respect by all interested States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors,

Welcoming the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation that made the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself a success,

Reaffirming the importance of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[2] and its 1967 Protocol,[3]

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Switzerland and other host States that made it possible to convene the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States and a series of preparatory meetings, as well as to those States that made voluntary contributions for this purpose;

3. Welcomes the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference on 31 May 1996;[1]

4. Also welcomes the innovative approach and close cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in initiating and supporting a multilateral constructive dialogue among a wide range of countries concerned that has brought agreement on guidelines for practical action;

5. Expresses its satisfaction with the work of the Conference, which laid down a solid foundation for further action by countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and States concerned and relevant international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

6. Underlines the urgent need to address the problems of those displaced, implement measures to prevent situations leading to further involuntary population displacement and effectively manage other types of migratory flows in the region;

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[1] A/51/341, appendix.

[2] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[3] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[4] A/51/341.

7. Urges all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to take further action with a view to the full implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

8. Invites all countries that have not yet done so to accede to and implement fully the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol;

9. Calls upon the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to continue to strengthen their commitment to the principles underlying the Programme of Action and to ensure progress in its implementation;

10. Recognizes that implementation of the Programme of Action requires additional financial resources, and calls for international cooperation in order to assist the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the field of migration and related matters;

11. Welcomes the readiness of States and interested international organizations to provide appropriate forms and levels of support for the practical implementation of the Programme of Action in a spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing;

12. Invites international financial and other institutions to contribute to financing projects and programmes within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

13. Requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and invites the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to continue to steer in close coordination the ongoing and future activities ensuring progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

14. Calls upon all relevant United Nations organs, bodies and organizations to promote, within their respective mandates, the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference;

15. Recognizes the important role to be played by non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and encourages the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and international organizations to strengthen their cooperation with non-governmental organizations and to involve them actively in the follow-up to the Conference;

16. Reaffirms the necessity for effective follow-up mechanisms to the Conference;

17. Highly appreciates the initial steps undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action;

18. Invites the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to demonstrate similar initiative in contributing to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action;

19. Welcomes the Joint Operational Strategy for 1996-2000 of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which outlines the practical dimensions of implementing the results of the Conference;

20. Emphasizes the necessity of fulfilling the recommendations of the Programme of Action relating to ensuring respect for human rights as an important factor in the management of migration flows, the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and stability;

21. Urges the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to take into account those elements of the Programme of Action that are relevant to his mandate;

22. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the measures taken and proposed and on progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution;

23. Decides to continue examination of this question at its fifty-second session.

82nd plenary meeting
12 December 1996